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Magick 7

Basic Ritual

Phil Hansford

> 'The first part of every ceremony is the banishing; the second the invoking.'

(-Crowley, Magick, p. 104)

It may be said that ritual is the very heart of magick. For it is through ritual that we achieve our magical results. Ritual is a magical procedure or ceremony we perform in order to change the environment. Usually we think of ritual as bearing on active magick, although certainly, it can also affect passive magick. Most often the change achieved is subjective (it may be subtle) and in the physical world. Outsiders may put them down to coincidence, but the effects are very real. Magical goals for a ritual should not be taken lightly.

The successful practice of magick depends upon strong belief. The simplest ritual of them all must be belief itself. If you can believe in your desired results strongly enough, that act is a magical ritual which will achieve your results. Even a very complex ritual is no more effective than strong belief. There are aids to concentration which may help. Thus in *creative visualization*, imagination and controlled breathing are brought into play.

Creative Visualization

When you want to magically achieve something, first picture it clearly in your mind. The more definite and specific your idea of what it is the better. Picture yourself having it or doing it. Visualize it as vividly and as intensely as you can and hold it in your thoughts for a few

moments. Concentrate on it intensely (it may help to hold your breath). Feel the energy of desire welling up inside you. Then suddenly feel the image or desire released from your mind. Feel the energy filtering through the image and intensifying it, as if the image is a 'stencil'. Imagine the energy exploding out from you into the macrocosm in all

directions at once, and feel the universe 'tilt' as it reacts to the force. (At the same time it may help to release your breath suddenly). Feel the energy draining from you. Finally, *believe* that your purpose *has* been accomplished; that it HAS HAPPENED, perhaps saying something such as "so mote it be", or "it is done".

The Basic Parts Of A Ritual

Often rituals are more formal than the above, but any full magick ritual must always reduce to these stages - 1) imaging; 2) building; 3) firing. Sometimes a ritual must be repeated every day for a while to achieve difficult results or to overcome weak belief.

The Magick Circle

Often an important part of formal ritual is the magick circle. Medieval magicians considered the circle essential, and placed great emphasis upon its exactness. Elaborate designs were invented with many layers of complex symbols and words. It was very important that the circle

be completely intact with no breaks in it. The magician and any other participants stand in the circle during ritual. The ritual began with a banishing of evil forces (using the lesser ritual of the pentagram for example) to keep them outside the circle. Today, circles are made on the floor with chalk or paint, rock salt, or a rope. Whatever its form, the circle is still an important part of magical protection for the magician. This is especially important for aversive entities and purposes. The circle also helps in focusing the energy of the ritual toward its purpose, that is, it keeps it contained until the magician is ready to release it. Of course, the magick circle is basically only a symbol, but it may eventually be possible to supplement the circle with electronic equipment for a similar purpose. We are researching the practicality of electrostaticly charged Faraday shields.

Artificial Elementals

An artificial elemental is useful for certain tasks: 1) invisible watcher and observer, telling you what it sees; 2) psychic guard; 3) it can be used in healing; 4) it is helpful in other ways. Ophiel calls the artificial elemental a 'familiar'. Producing your own artificial elemental is fairly easy. YOU MUST ASSUME THAT THE ACT HAS PRODUCED RESULTS, EVEN IF YOU DO NOT IMMEDIATELY OBSERVE THEM. It is entirely possible to produce one of these little beasties and not know it (not being clairvoyant enough to

observe it directly). Therefore, and this is a general principle of any magick, never ignore forces you have set into motion. Even though you may not see the elemental, you may nevertheless 'feel' it.

WARNING - Do not use artificial elementals for any kind of aversive magick at this point; they can be nasty little critters to get rid of. Should you have to eliminate one of them which you created in error, you must re-absorb it back into yourself through your will; or in some cases you can 'exorcise' it.

How To Create An Artificial Elemental

You can create your own artificial elemental for various purposes. An artificial elemental is basically a thoughtform which has been strengthened with emotion. Refer to the aura color chart in the previous lesson and decide what color to make the elemental, based upon your intended purpose. Apple green is a good choice for general purposes.

Then decide on a shape or outline. Do you want your elemental to resemble some sort of animal? A simple circle or cloud is a good place to start. With this in mind you can use ritual to create your elemental. Creative visualization is good for this. Visualize it glowing before you. A darkened room is helpful for this.

Communicate with your elemental with telepathy, by talking to it, or with creative visualization. Your artificial elemental is closely linked to you and your subconscious attitudes. It will generally not do things you think it cannot do. As in any magick, results relate to effort and belief. Another way of looking at an artificial elemental is as an aspect of your personality (sub personality) which has been detached from you.

Invocation

Formal ritual usually involves the invocation (ritually calling up) of a god or goddess, spirit, or other entity. In this sense, magick is somewhat similar to pagan religion and witchcraft. However, we consider magick ritual a technique, not a religion. Worship need not be involved.

Sometimes the invocation of an entity creates an artificial elemental.

Crowley says there are three different kinds of invocation -

1. Devotion to the entity (as in the Bhakti yoga of the Hare Krishna sect; the Faustian devil pact).
2. Ceremonial invocation - usual method of the middle ages.
3. Drama - usually needs more than one person (as in a mass).

Because of the microcosm-macrocosm identity, when you invoke the gods, you are invoking aspects of yourself. Jung has referred to the gods as primitive archetypes. This makes it sound like spiritual entities are illusions. But in fact the microcosm-macrocosm identity does not discredit the gods and goddesses. It instead helps to illustrate our relationship to the cosmos.

>>Cautions<<

1. Balance is important in magick. Vary the entities invoked in order to keep your personality in balance.
2. Often as not a ritual may produce side-effects, usually something similar to, though not exactly the desired goal. If the true goal is delayed (as sometimes happens) we may see the side effects first. And if for some reason the goal is not achieved at all ('missing the target') the side effects may be pronounced. Examples: 1) You use magick ritual to hurry shipment of an anticipated package in the mail. Side effect - the next day an unexpected package (the wrong one) arrives instead. 2) You use magick ritual to cause a certain person to phone you. Side effect - for several days all sorts of people phone you...The sides effects will not affect you (or anyone else) adversely unless that is what you inwardly want.
3. We may say with certainty that "something always happens" when we perform a magick ritual. But like everything else, magick follows the 'law of results'. This means that results require effort of some kind. And if you don't work hard enough at it you don't get results. Difficult goals have greater resistance (magical inertia) to overcome. If the ritual doesn't produce the desired results there is a good chance that the reason for the failure is within ourselves. Be certain there is no contradiction between your model and your magical goals. Sometimes self doubt and mental contradictions (wanting and not wanting at the same time) may interfere. The first step in magick is to re-program your model. And, of course you can help your magical results by working on the physical level toward your goals. Don't expect them to fall into your lap by themselves.
4. A peculiar quality of magick is time displacement. Results of a ritual are not usually instantaneous. There is often a delay of 12 hours or more. Difficult tasks or weakly performed ritual are more likely to be delayed. In most cases a slight delay is all right, and it gives us time to get used to the comming changes. And sometimes the effects of a ritual appear to extend to before the ritual was performed!
5. Because of the way magick works, a ritual may create an emphasis in what is sought, and a de-emphasis in everything else. Balance is therefore important here. Once the magical result is achieved it may be 'bound' to you and difficult to get rid of should you later decide to do so. Example: You use a magick ritual to help you find and buy a new house. Years later when you decide to sell it, you are unable to do so. Consider your magical goals wisely so you don't get stuck with something you don't really want. Note that theory says you can always unbind through ritual what was bound to you...theory says.
6. Sometimes the environment appears to react against the magick after the results are achieved. This is particularly noticeable in using magick to affect the weather (and the main reason why you should NOT use magick to affect the weather). For example...Your performance of a ritual to produce a sunny day produces a sunny day. The next day is sunny, all right, but the rest of the month is cold and overcast. Here the weather seems to react to the magick in the opposite way to re-establish its natural balance. It is something like pushing a pendulum to one side and releasing it - the pendulum swings to the other side. To quote Emerson - "For everything you gain you lose something...". I don't know that this is always true in magick, but it does

illustrate the point. And another reason not to use magick to affect the weather is that it might foul it up in other parts of the country (world??).

7. Finally, magick ritual (or any magick or occultism) is very dangerous for the mentally unstable. If you should somehow 'get out too far', eat 'heavy foods' as previously discussed (lesson on chakras) and use your religious background or old belief system for support. But remember too, that weird experiences are not necessarily bad experiences.

Review Questions

1. What is creative visualization?
2. List the basic parts of a ritual.
3. What is invocation?

Research Topics (For Independent Study)

1. Examine the differences between western magick and oriental magick.
2. How do medieval grimoires follow the basic ritual pattern?
3. Research and design your own formal ritual.

Book List

- P.E.I. Bonewitz, Real Magic.
- David Conway, Magic: an Occult Primer (or Ritual Magic).
- Aleister Crowley, Magick in Theory and Practice.
- Denning and Phillips, Creative Visualization.
- Ophiel, Creative Visualization.
- A.E. Powell, The Astral Body.
- _____, The Mental Body.
- Joseph Weed, Wisdom of the Ancient Masters.
- Julian Wilde, Grimoire of Chaos Magick.

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